

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-16 (Canceled).

Claim 17 (New): A process for fabricating a heat exchanger having a pair of headers spaced apart from each other, a plurality of flat heat exchange tubes arranged in parallel and spaced apart from each other, each flat heat exchange tube extending between the headers and having opposite ends joined to a respective header, a side plate disposed externally of and at a distance from an end tube of the plurality of flat heat exchange tubes, and corrugated fins arranged between adjacent flat heat exchange tubes and between the side plate and the end tube adjacent thereto, the process comprising:

preparing the side plate having a projection provided at each of lengthwise opposite end portions of the side plate on one surface thereof and having upright walls at widthwise opposite side edges of the side plate and standing upright in a same direction as a projecting direction of the projections, the projections and upright walls being formed integrally with the side plate;

arranging the plurality of flat heat exchange tubes in parallel and spaced from each other;

disposing the side plate externally of and at a distance from the end tube with the projections and the upright walls facing away from the end tube;

arranging corrugated fins between adjacent heat exchange tubes and between the side plate and the end tube adjacent thereto;

placing opposite ends of each of the flat heat exchange tubes into respective corresponding insertion holes formed in the pair of headers;

arranging a pressure member having a length greater than the distance between the projections at the opposite end portions of the side plate, between the upright walls of the side plate in contact with the projections at the opposite end portions;

binding the pressure member, the side plate, the heat exchange tubes and the corrugated fins together with fastening members provided at locations to both sides of the projections with respect to a longitudinal direction of the side plate; and

brazing the headers to the heat exchange tubes, and brazing the corrugated fins to at least one of an adjacent heat exchange tube and an adjacent side plate.

Claim 18 (New): The process according to claim 17, wherein said preparing a side plate comprises providing the projections of the side plate positioned at a distance of up to 135 mm from one of the headers when the side plate is incorporated into the heat exchanger.

Claim 19 (New): The process according to claim 17, wherein said preparing a side plate comprises providing each projection as at least two projections spaced apart along a widthwise direction of the side plate.

Claim 20 (New): The process according to claim 17, wherein said preparing a side plate comprises providing the projections of the side plate to have a height of 0.3 to 1 mm.

Claim 21 (New): The process according to claim 17, wherein said preparing a side plate comprises providing the projections of the side plate to have a circular shape of 1 to 4 mm in diameter.

Claim 22 (New): The process according to claim 17 further comprising providing a sub-projection formed at a distance from each projection at the end portions of the side plate, each of the sub-projections being positioned inwardly of the projections with respect to the longitudinal direction of the side plate.

Claim 23 (New): The process according to claim 22 wherein each sub-projection is provided at a distance of up to 30 mm from one of the projections at each end portion of the side plate.

Claim 24 (New): The process according to claim 22 wherein said preparing a side plate comprises providing each sub-projection as at least two sub-projections spaced apart along a widthwise direction of the side plate.

Claim 25 (New): The process according to claim 22, wherein said preparing a side plate comprises providing the sub-projections of the side plate to have a height of 0.3 to 1 mm.

Claim 26 (New): The process according to claim 22, wherein said preparing a side plate comprises providing the sub-projections of the side plate to have a circular shape of 1 to 4 mm in diameter.

Claim 27 (New): The process according to claim 22, wherein said binding comprises providing a fastening member at a location between a header and a projection at an end portion of the side plate, and providing a fastening member at another location inwardly of a sub-projection with respect to the longitudinal direction of the side plate.

Claim 28 (New): The process according to claim 23, wherein said binding comprises providing a fastening member at a location between a header and a projection at an end portion of the side plate, and providing a fastening member at another location inwardly of a sub-projection with respect to the longitudinal direction of the side plate.

Claim 29 (New): The process according to claim 24, wherein said binding comprises providing a fastening member at a location between a header and a projection at an end portion of the side plate, and providing a fastening member at another location inwardly of a sub-projection with respect to the longitudinal direction of the side plate.

Claim 30 (New): The process according to claim 25, wherein said binding comprises providing a fastening member at a location between a header and a projection at an end portion of the side plate, and providing a fastening member at another location inwardly of a sub-projection with respect to the longitudinal direction of the side plate.

Claim 31 (New): The process according to claim 26 , wherein said binding comprises providing a fastening member at a location between a header and a projection at an end portion of the side plate, and providing a fastening member at another location inwardly of a sub-projection with respect to the longitudinal direction of the side plate.

Claim 32 (New): A process for fabricating a heat exchanger comprising:
providing a first header and a second header opposing the first header;

arranging a plurality of refrigerant tubes each extending between the first and second headers such that a space is provided between adjacent refrigerant tubes of the plurality of refrigerant tubes;

arranging a side plate extending between the first and second headers and adjacent to an end refrigerant tube such that an end space is provided between the end refrigerant tube and the side plate, the side plate having a plurality of projections extending from a surface of the side plate that is opposite to said end space;

placing corrugated fins in each space and in each end space;

providing a pressure member in contact with the plurality of projections of the side plate; and

binding a fastening member around the plurality of refrigerant tubes, the corrugated fins, the side plate and the pressure member such that the fastening member causes the pressure member to apply a force to the plurality of projection members thereby deflecting a portion of the side plate toward the end refrigerant tube to create a strong holding force on the corrugated fin in the end space.

Claim 33 (New): The process according to claim 32, wherein said arranging a side plate comprises providing the projections of the side plate positioned at a distance of up to 135 mm from one of the headers when the side plate is incorporated into the heat exchanger.

Claim 34 (New): The process according to claim 32, wherein said arranging a side plate comprises providing each projection as at least two projections spaced apart along a widthwise direction of the side plate.

Claim 35 (New): The process according to claim 32, wherein said arranging a side plate comprises providing the projections of the side plate to have a height of 0.3 to 1 mm.

Claim 36 (New): The process according to claim 32, wherein said arranging a side plate comprises providing the projections of the side plate to have a circular shape of 1 to 4 mm in diameter.